

ac/ops

Muslim World

18 APR 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR: Comptroller

FROM:

[redacted]
Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

SUBJECT: OMB Reduction of FY 1981 Funding for Muslim
World Coverage

REFERENCE: Your 18 April Telephone Call

1. The reduction by OMB of FBIS' FY 1981 budget for Muslim World coverage from [redacted] million seriously impacts on new programs currently in the gestation stage that arise out of the special FY 1980 funding. Such a reduction at this juncture raises doubts about FBIS' ability to continue some of the approved activities and will definitely require limiting the scope of others.

2. You noted Keith Hall's concern about our ability to hire "indigenous" employees for the Gulf Bureau in Bahrain. We share this concern and have been involved in a broad recruiting campaign in Europe, the Middle East, and the United States designed to find the specific language skills necessary to staff the bureau. An officer has just returned from a trip to London, Istanbul, Ankara, and Karachi where four potential monitors [redacted] (required) for the Gulf Bureau were identified and put into process. This recruiting trip has turned up a number of additional leads in Europe and the United States which should enable us to complete recruiting for the total of 12 monitors required at the London and Gulf bureaus.

3. As Hall indicated, there is some degree of uncertainty with regard to setting up the Islamabad recording unit, but we are working to clarify the situation as expeditiously as possible. The State Department has advised Ambassador Hummel of our interest in establishing a small recording unit in Islamabad, and I will be meeting with the Ambassador to discuss this when he returns to Washington next week. Reduction of the funding for the Islamabad

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Review on 21 Apr '00
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SECRET

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project means that our plan for real-time coverage of the Soviet regional radios, via feeds over commercial telephone lines to a monitoring unit sited in London, will have to be changed. This would probably be done by substituting an operation involving the recording of relevant radio broadcasts and forwarding the tapes through the State Department pouch system, with delays in processing of 7-10 days.

4. It seems that OAS's objection to the projected figure of [] million for FBIS' Muslim World coverage in FY 1981 is not based on opposition to the value of the program upon which we have embarked, but rather on Hall's perception that we cannot meet all the elements of the program and will, thus, not require the full amount of funding requested. He may have drawn this conclusion from a discussion he had in March with senior FBIS officers. If Hall's perception is wrong, we will be faced with reducing integral parts of the program approved by Congress, in order to meet the funding limitations now being placed on FY 1981 activities. The loss of real-time capability from Islamabad, in particular, will represent a significant degradation in our capability to meet the collection requirements on which the rationale for the special funding were based.

5. All portions of this memorandum are classified SECRET.

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FBIS/EQPS [] (21 April '80)

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